

May 1, 2006

The Honorable John McCain  
United States Senate  
241 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator McCain:

As Director of the Arizona Office of Tourism, our tourism and travel industry fully supports the Border Trade Alliance (BTA) and its Resolution with respect to the Western Hemispheric Travel Initiative (WHTI). As civil leaders along the international border, we are concerned with the potential negative effects this initiative may have in our business community.

We as a State agency are in full support of facilitating legitimate trade and travel, which is a key economic engine for our tourism and travel community. Of equal importance to the state of Arizona and our industry is to be included in discussions with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and Department of State (DOS). Governor Napolitano met with representatives from DOS in June 2005 at the Arizona-Mexico Commission Plenary Session to express her concerns about WHTI and its potential impact on our state. She also made recommendations on the implementation of WHTI that would alleviate concerns while still accomplishing the objectives of the initiative.

A need for our community is to ensure that the WHTI program is compatible and integrated with other programs designed to enhance the nation's efforts to protect America. We must continue to work together in providing a seamless yet secure process to allow cross-border trade and commerce to flow. As you are well aware, any disruption in trade and commerce could have a devastating effect on our tourism community.

We must be assured by the federal government that adequate infrastructure needs are met prior to the implementation of the WHTI program. Another serious concern with the WHTI is the passport requirement and costs to obtain a passport. The U.S. Government must find an alternative to the passport that is deemed affordable and not cost-prohibitive including consideration for multiple periods of time.

The Arizona Office of Tourism respectfully requests that both DHS and the State Department work with both local and state governments to provide the most efficient and effective WHTI program for the safety of the American people, and to ensure that a comprehensive public information campaign accompanies the implementation of the program. In closing, we appreciate your representation of our international border community. Please find the attached BTA resolution for your review.

Sincerely,

Margie Emmermann  
Director, Arizona Office of Tourism

Attachment

Cc: Governor Janet Napolitano  
Maria Louisa O'Connell, BTA